

1493
L E T T E R S

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R O R E L L A N A,

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I R I S H H E L O T,

T O

The Seven Northern Counties

NOT REPRESENTED

In the National Assembly of Delegates,

HELD AT DUBLIN, OCTOBER, 1784,

FOR OBTAINING

*A more Equal Representation of the People in
the Parliament of Ireland.*

Ἐν μύρτου κλαδί τὸ ξίφος φέρσω
Ὡσπερ Ἀρμόδιος καὶ Ἀριστογείτων,
Ὅτι τὸν τυραννὸν κτάνειν,
Ἰσονομίας καὶ Ἀθῆνας ἐποιήσατον.

ORIGINALLY PUBLISHED IN THE BELFAST NEWS-LETTER.

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Editor's Advertisement.

THE Editor has been induced to republish the Letters of the Slave ORELLANA, from a desire of giving greater permanence and publicity to sentiments that seem the joint product of a heart and head devoted to the public good—from a hope, that if these Letters had any effect in the seven counties particularly addressed (every one of which sent Delegates to Convention), a similar effect may perhaps be produced in the few counties as yet *unrepresented*—and, chiefly, from an ardent and, he hopes, virtuous emulation, of asserting in his profession, the sacred Liberty of the Press, in times when a gag has been put into this mouth and organ of the People, and when LAW has been compelled to commit outrage upon CONSTITUTION.

ABBAY-STREET,

March, 1785.

1951-1952

L E T T E R S
O F A N
IRISH HELOT, &c.

L E T T E R I.

FELLOW-SLAVES!

A SHORT time will discover whether the people of Ireland be the most magnanimous, or the meanest of mankind. Personal character is not established in a few years. It requires still longer time to estimate with precision the character of a nation; little as yet has been seen of Ireland as a *public*; and all that has been seen may have proceeded from a childish caprice, which sometimes deviates into right, as well as from the durable stability of manly principle. The love of ornament, a passion common to the savage and to the courtier, the force of sympathy which kindles so quickly, and communicates so rapidly through the warm and light texture of youthful minds, a boyish fondness for the semblance of war, the applause of gaping multitudes, the benedictions of the aged, and the flatteries of the fair, the natural love of order, the hope of command, and the influence of fashion—may have produced a transient political phænomenon, called, VOLUNTEERS OF IRELAND. *Indeed*, they made a mighty pretty show, and *poor* Ireland, whose chief pride

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had been the white shirt that covered, and scarcely covered her nakedness, looked wondrous well in her red cloth and her gold-lace. Her story is a short one. About six years ago the honest gentlewoman awaked from a trance ; drest herself by way of frolic in regimentals, entered as a volunteer into the English service to supply the place of the invalids that were sent to guard our coasts, marched up the *Mons sacer* of Dungannon, marched down again, became a strolling player, went to " enact Brutus in the capitol," totally *forgot her part*, threw off her warlike attire, and sunk down again—a wretched woman.

Let not this nation yet *dare* to call itself patriotic ; there is scarcely a nation on the face of the earth which at certain periods has not burst into general notice, and illumined the historic page with a gleam of glory ; but this glory quickly passed away, and the brand, which, perhaps, had filled the world with its flames, still sunk, like a taper in the socket ; even Corsica has *twinkled* in the Mediterranean. There must be a certain time, and that not a short one, in which the constant agency of public spirit shall have produced an *habitual* determination of the public will to the public good, powerful enough even to influence the manners and morals of a people, before that people should be dignified with the stile and title of *patriotic* ; good passions form good principles, but to produce this effect, their operations must be lasting as well as vigorous.

The man who addresses you is a *slave* ! As his condition is such, he feels himself inclined to bless his God that he is sensible of that condition. The bondage must be felt before the chain can be broken. I call that servitude beyond the power of redemption, where a callous body is united to a senseless mind, and where man is transformed into a well-trained *biped*, that grows fat in the interval of blows. I am not ashamed to express the acute sensation which I have of my condition as a slave, because I
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consider it in the light of an auspicious signal from the hand of Heaven, that I am still *capable* of freedom. I prostrate myself before that *Being*, in whose eyes every slave must be an idolater, and over whose rights every tyrant must be an usurper, beseeching him to pierce the hearts of my dear countrymen with the same sharp sense of their condition that I have of *my own*.—I rise up, and feel myself a *man* !

Every nation under the sun must be placed in one of two conditions. It must be free, or enslaved. I make no scruple in affirming that there is *no* medium between those two situations ; and if we are deceived into the belief that there is such an intermediate state, it is by mistaking the prudent moderation of tyrants, the mildness of modern manners, or the gentle but powerful influence of religion for public liberty ; or—a still more fatal error—for sufficient security in the enjoyment of that liberty.—Our own wills, or which ought to be the same thing, the will of our representatives, either possesses an adequate share in the supreme legislative power, or it does not. If it does not, we are slaves. *We are so*. Call yourselves, countrymen, by your true title. It is that fallacious and empty title, of *freemen* and fellow-citizens, which cheats you into the belief that substance is connected with the sound. Friends and fellow-citizens, is the address used by the Venetian Aristocracy to the simple populace ; and when the edict came from Caprea, Tiberius did not hesitate to call the senate which registered it, *Romans*. Your boyhood and your youth were led astray by false associations ; and blinded by the refined delusion of history : you claimed relationship with the Saxon *Alfred*, who established juries, crushed corruption, and laid the foundation of the English constitution : with *Hampden*, who had a head to contrive, a heart to conceive, and a hand to execute ; and *Sidney*, who shook the scaffold with his undaunted tread, was,

to be sure, one of your great progenitors! 'Tis all the fairy tale of Infancy. You are all *native Irish*, under the controul of an *English pale*, and every rotten borough in the kingdom is nothing more or less than a *feudal castle*, and the collection of these petty sovereignties is nothing more or less than *despotism*.

I know no idea which has been productiv of more harm than one which took its rise from the speculations of some fanciful foreigners, that there was something of superhuman excellence in the frame and contexture of what is called *our* political constitution. — National partiality, or more properly national bigotry, has adopted this idea with enthusiasm, and superstitiously adhered to it. The same sanctified veil of mystery has been thrown over civil and religious matters; and the same timidity in questioning the supposed perfection of this complex sort of being, called king, lords, and commons, has bound down its votaries into a sort of political bondage unworthy of free-men, and men of free-thought. The alliance between church and state has preserved and sanctified the abuses of both; and the same dogmatical spirit which established for all future generations a certain system of *religious* belief, has transferred to our *civil* constitution an equal authority over the minds of men; the same reluctance to examine the grounds of our *political* faith, and the measures of submission to what has a century or two for its support. Error is as ancient as truth, and the world is as yet too young in political experience to repose upon any plan of government with unbounded confidence. — If there be a progression in the arts and attainments of mankind, occasioned by the discoveries of one age being added to the acquisitions of the past; and if the science of politics, one of the most important, be not excluded from the same advantage, I should imagine that *alteration*, provided it springs from public opinion, not from personal caprice, has a greater chance of *reforming* than of *deforming* government.

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When the perfection of our constitution is brought as a reason to conclude that it ought to be IMMORTAL, I consider the persons who make use of this argument as covering themselves with a *fig leaf*, in order to hide their indolence, their timidity, or their corruption. As it was in the beginning, is now and ever shall be, is the sum and substance of their political creed.

I have called you *slaves*, and you are so in every acceptance of the term, except in having a *capability* of being freemen. Whether that capability be improved into the energy of independence, or whether it will only serve to accumulate disgrace upon your dastardly souls, two little months will determine. The *freedom* of your present *mutilated constitution* is only to be found in the Utopia of a fanciful Frenchman, or the political reveries of a Genevan philosopher. By those wretched multitudes, I swear, who wander with their fellow bruits through the fertile pasturage of the south, by those miserable emigrants who are now ploughing a bleak and boisterous ocean—the *democratic spirit of the constitution is no more!*

Hear me for my cause!—I speak only seeing that all is silent.—I speak, because the warmest wish that swells this breast is the welfare of my country.—I speak with a feeble voice, but could I add the voice of *millions* to my own, with the deep-toned energy of thunder, I would cry aloud to the slumbering virtue of the land—*Awake, arise,—for if you sleep you die!*

O R E L L A N A.

L E T T E R

L E T T E R II.

FELLOW-SLAVES !

FROM my inmost soul do I detest that sort of inquisitive indolence, so common at present in this country, which is perpetually asking the pestering question, *what news? what news?* The question comes from a character made up of a boy's curiosity, a girl's timidity, and a dotard's garrulity. If you be MEN, to whom I address myself, MAKE NEWS. There is a certain querulous disposition of mind, which calls for time, place, and circumstance to give it distinction: the enterprizing spirit *makes* the occasion it desires, and turns every occurrence to its own advantage. It is particularly in times of popular commotion, that every man may give what the artists call *relief* and elevation to his character; he feels the force of his soul, and rises above the element he lives in. Even I, little known, and where known unnoticed, triumph in the secret closet of my heart, over those abler writers who are silent in such a spirit-stirring season.—“ A poor little soldier had been the “ standing jest of his military companions. In the “ day of battle, a battery suddenly opened on the “ corps to which he belonged; grenadiers and all, “ in a panic, fell prostrate on the ground, while “ the little fellow stood erect as his God had made “ him, and looking down with a smile of contempt “ upon the fallen heroes, cried, Which of us is tallest now?”

Constitutional rights are those rights respecting life, liberty, and property, without which we cannot be free; and an assemblage of those rights, I call free *constitution*. Every art and science has its fundamental axioms, which, by their intrinsic evidence become
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worthy of universal acceptance; which if not expressed, are always understood in every deduction of reasoning, and to whom, in all dubious cases, there must be made a last appeal. The science of politics, not less demonstrative than others, has its first principles and self-evident truths, which are axioms in their nature, the source from whence all reasoning must spring, and distinguished by the name of Constitutional Rights. It is upon the solid basis of these rights that every system and plan of free government, however various in form, must be erected. Those that rest their liberties upon certain imaginary *checks* in the machine of state, are more conversant in the constitution of a clock than that of a commonwealth; and it is a credulous reliance on the operative virtue of these complex contrivances, which too often lulls the interposing power of the people into fancied security. This is to sleep under the shadow of a pile, where, to speak like a political mechanic, the center of gravity falls without the *base*. The only efficient check salutary to the nation, is the check which the governed keep on the governors; and if this check does not operate, the form of free government may remain, but the soul that animates it is lost for ever. Let not any high spirited and magnanimous nation rely upon the fortuitous collision of three discordant estates, whose accidental opposition of private interests may, *perchance*, promote the public good, and may as probably counteract it. Away with the liberty that hangs pendulating upon a *perchance*! An equal balance of monarchical, aristocratical, and democratical power, on one common *quiescent* centre of gravity, is hard to be conceived in theory, and has never been realized in experience. If government be constituted for the good of individuals, the balance of power must dip into their scale, and the people will then, as they do now, enjoy a *virtual constitution* which has no virtue in it. Thus the only solid piles on which the fabric of freedom

dom remains unshaken are *constitutional rights*, enforced by the controlling energy and momentum of that mighty mass to which those rights belong—"spiritus intus alit, totamque agitat molem."

From those rights, the laws in every free country ought to flow, as the streams of life from the heart of man; plainly indicating in every branch of their progress, the source from whence they derive virtue and energy, and in their remote deviations always capable of being traced back to the fountain of vitality. As the propositions of Euclid are deduced from the self-evident axioms prefixed to the work, the laws in a free country are so many political theorems or problems derived from a ground of certainty equally uncontrovertible—the rights of human nature. These first principles of free government are by no means *numerous*, but their *value*, on this very account, becomes inestimable. On *two* commands hang all the law and the prophets: and the principles of policy are not perhaps more numerous or more complex than those of religion. If one axiom be questioned, mathematical science drops to the ground: If one constitutional right be usurped, our security in the rest becomes precarious.

If I be asked to name one of these constitutional rights, I cover my face with my hand, and I mention the right of being taxed by ourselves, or by our representatives in parliament; without the absolute enjoyment of which prerogative, what is the distance between an Irishman and a Freeman? Not less than three thousand miles. Until you obtain the *practical* enjoyment of this primary, necessary, self-evident, uncontrovertible right, you can have no *constitution*, and your just title—compliment yourselves as you please—is slaves. If indeed it can satisfy your puny ambition, you may embrace the theory of a constitution just as Ixion embraced the painted cloud, while the *goddess* herself eluded the grasp, and mocked the *impotent* mortal. A Frenchman may have the same

same enjoyment in Montesquieu, and a Genevan in De Lolme.

I call your attention to another quality necessarily inherent in rights of constitution—their *incommunicability*.—These fundamental privileges respecting life and liberty are incommunicable, and government is instituted to enforce these rights in *us*, not to exercise them themselves. Liberty can remain liberty only while it is its own protector; the moment it resigns those *primary* rights into the hands of others, all that remains is nominal and delusive. If you trust the shield, you may present the bearer with the spear. Freemen cannot, while freemen, delegate to parliament the use and possession of any one fundamental right or franchise; for if they do, by what *right* can it be reclaimed?—If therefore, any one *constitutional* right be notoriously infringed upon, the existence of the rest being in the certain prospect of destruction, they must, on the moment, be **ALL** called into action; and they can be brought instantly to our assistance, for being in their nature *incapable* of transference of delegation, they stay within call. Their residence is the **HOME OF A COURAGEOUS HEART**.

Now the infringement of that constitutional right of representation being so manifest, the majesty of the people may, on the emergency of the moment, without deigning to ask leave from delegated power, exercise the constitutional right of assembling together, and agitating the most effectual and practicable means of redress. I may not be lawyer enough to speak in the refined subtlety of that dangerous profession, with respect to the strict legality of *conventional* meetings: But if I be asked Whether such meetings be not contrary to law? I should answer, *impossible*; for they coincide with the spirit, *genius*, and principles of free constitution. Must I always have a little pettifogging lawyer at my elbow to advise with in such cases as these? Blessed be God, whose
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finger has engraved them on the human heart, the principles of free government are plain, perspicuous, palpable, easily understood by the illiterate, and fit to be inscribed on the horn-book of infancy. Shame upon the man who is not as well acquainted with the first principles on which free government is founded, as the attorney-general or any other attorney in this kingdom !

Some constitutional rights are *expressed* by the law, others which may not be expressed are *understood* ; for being antecedent to the laws, they are supposed, and taken for granted. Such is the right of meeting in popular assemblies, and such also is the right of addressing legislature for redress of grievances. Even an allowance that such assemblies are unprecedented, does not make them illegal. They may be their own precedent, and justify themselves. They are not contrary to law, because they may not be according to law. The law does not *intend* such meetings, because it is not their nature to take cognizance of any measures which may in the least innovate on the present established form of government :—no governments, except those in America, provide for their own reformation, by the institution of a censorial power, which at certain periods shall become the saviour of the constitution and the restorative of the state. Were recourse to be had only to measures, according to the strict and rigorous letter of law, no reform could be attained to all eternity ; as little as a watch, with its main-spring broken, could by its own agency regain the power of telling time.

To what power then, is an injured people to appeal ?—to the *genius*, the sacred and venerable *genius* of the constitution.—Methinks I see his awful figure, habited like a slave, and in majestic ruin, sitting like the Danite of old, between the two pillars that support the building ; brooding over his imperishable strength, and suffering it for a time to furnish sport for aristocratical arrogance.

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The object, then, of constitutional meetings is constitutional, and the meeting itself must, therefore, be constitutional.—Let it, at the same time, be constantly remembered what this object is. It is to *reform*. It is not, therefore, to *subvert*, much less to introduce that anarchy among the people, which must overturn all government. As little is it the object to *create* any new form of government, much less to invest any one estate of the legislature with an arbitrary power of creating this new form, a power, which if abused, must end in the complete destruction of the very essence and substance of liberty. The object is to *reform*, and in the means employed for its attainment, we must avoid anarchy on the one hand, and despotism on the other.

When the sheriff refuses to call a county meeting, it is universally allowed that the freeholders have an inherent right of summoning themselves into Convention. What is true when predicated of a single county, must surely be true of two, of four, of a whole province, of four provinces—the kingdom. All the difference is, that the *posse regni*, a high and mighty word, stands in place of the *posse comitatus*: And it exercises a right similar to that of a single county, with regard to its representatives, in instructing the grand representative of the nation.

As long, therefore, as the H. C. by their rejection of the *principle* of reform, *disables* itself from all free and fair discussion of the subject, it becomes the business of the people who first formed that house to deliberate on the means of reforming it: and if in the natural and necessary progression of this great and good work, county meetings should swell into provincial, and these again coalesce into one great national assembly, this *assembly* ought to be considered in no other light than as a constitutional, and at the same time peaceable means of expressing,
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with energy and effect, the *conjunct* will of a royal people—*whose cause is good; whose numbers are great; and whose union must prove irresistible.*

O R E L L A N A.

L E T T E R III.

FELLOW-SLAVES!

PERSEVERE, says the venerable CHARLEMONT, while the grand climacteric, like a sharp-pointed sword, hangs dangling over his head; *persevere*, my dear countrymen, and by patience, prudence, and the possible intervention of fortunate contingencies, we shall attain, *in process of time*, to the summit of our desires. In what time, my good Lord, in what time?—for our yoke is heavy, and in a little time we shall not, as it appears, be allowed even to *groan* beneath the burden.—Why, (replies the *boary* Chieftain) perhaps in half a century.—Alas! are we to measure by centuries the grievances which centuries have accumulated upon us? Is there no dauntless virtue that can snatch the gift of freedom from lingering time by glorious anticipation? And have we no other alternative than to pray for an antediluvian existence, or, to die with the poor visionary consolation, that liberty may be the lot of our great, great grand children? For my own part, I must honestly confess, that I like more substantial gratification than the hope of leaning from a cloud, enjoying the prospect of happy *futurity*. Posterity is little to us: *we* are every thing to posterity; and
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every individual among you, in times, such as these, may be considered as an Adam, whose want of resolution, indolence, or corruption, may not only perpetuate his own servitude, but entail it on a generation yet unborn, whose first cry will be for that liberty which is their rightful inheritance.

Resolutions ! Resolutions ! shall we never have done with resolutions ? Resolution that stalks like a giant before, while the dwarf Performance comes lagging behind him. The walls of the Rotunda may be papered with resolutions ; and I should like to see the character of Harlequin at a masquerade pasted over with party-coloured resolutions, and one of the most *pointed* serving as a sheath—to his dagger of lath. What are these resolutions ? Why they are BONDS by which you have engaged your honour, your veracity, your credit as a people ; and if these engagements be forfeited, your honour, veracity, and credit must be forfeited also. Let all the nations of the earth know that the people of Ireland have, of their own accord, *committed* themselves on the question of reform. Who forced you to enter upon the subject ? Point me out the man. Flood himself *followed* the people. You did not assemble like the white-boys in the night ; you did not whisper these things in a corner : you were rather numerous to engage in a plot : your resolutions issued from the press with the sanction of signature and the stamp of publicity : they were borne on the wings of the wind to surrounding nations : they were translated in foreign prints ; and the pusillanimity of the French language sunk beneath the republican hardihood of your expression. The words which have escaped your lips are irrevocable. They will be handed down in the faithful records of history, and your fame or your infamy will be notorious and immortal.

When this county bore with greater patience than at present the pressure of public misfortune, her
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wretchedness was productive of that kind of virtue which best suited her situation ; and her government for the most part displayed the œconomy of indigence. The expences of the nation were regulated by its revenue, and a small surplus, which generally remained in the public purse, manifested even in its misapplication somewhat of the vigour of competence ; particularly when contrasted with the distress opulence of a sister kingdom sinking under the weight of an enormous debt, though possessed of the commerce of the world. The œconomical equalization of revenue and expenditure preserved in a great degree the trustees of the people from the means of corruption, which a redundancy of national treasure must have easily supplied. The grievances of the country, joined to the calamities of war, became at length insupportable : the slender sustenance of a single manufacture grew precarious, and the sources of existence were dried up : —A revolution necessarily took place, and Ireland obtained what has been called Free Trade and Independent Constitution ; two of the greatest CURSES, I am free to say, that ever can befall a country, unless they be crowned, and that speedily too, with Parliamentary Reform.

For what, in the first place, must be the inevitable consequence of free-trade, even supposing that this delusive term, which merely expresses the inclination, would also denote an ability of making such trade productive ? Mark the consequence. Is there one among you simple enough to believe, that the large increase of public revenue consequent upon the increase of national wealth, would be faithfully expended in the service of the State, and that all undue influence would diminish when the all-powerful instrument of this influence was more abundantly supplied ? No,—assuredly no. Does not your latest experience teach you to answer no ? Does not history teach you, that the enjoyment of plenty

ty has always been converted into the most successful means of abolishing the remembrance of freedom? Does not the awful and instructive example of a sister kingdom demonstrate, that the same commerce which at one period can produce a strength in public liberty not to be borne down by the highest swell of arbitrary power, may in no long time after, create a fund for establishing an insidious system of court-influence, fatal to the dearest interests of the community? Let the man who rests the least confidence in the future incorruptibility of parliaments, constituted as at present, consider past history, the temper and manners of the times, the contagious example of a sister nation with whom we are necessarily connected, the various modes of corruption, the dexterity of its professional agents, the singularity of persevering patriotism; let this man add to all these the rapid accumulation of unappropriated revenue, and then lift up his head to deny that a free-trade must drive us more rapidly into consummate slavery, unless the people obtain and exercise a greater power, over those whom—begging judge R——’s pardon, I must call the representatives of the people *de jure*, if they be not *de facto*. If a free-trade be not improved, we continue as we were, insulted indeed, with a nominal independence of constitution; and if it be improved, we are only gilding the chains with which others shall bind us.

For what, in the second place, is this boasted legislative independence?—what but a transference of arbitrary power from despotism abroad to aristocracy at home; from an ostensible power, which did not scruple to profess what it dared to practise, to a hidden power which steals away the rights of the nation like a cut-purse, and when challenged, shrinks again into the mass of the common multitude; from a power which must have dwindled away in the progress of national improvement, to a power which grows with our growth and strengthens with our strength,

strength, in health enlarging like a wen, in sickness exhausting like a drain ; a power not moderated by distance, but which lives among you, rankles in the heart of the landlord, lies in wait at your doors, lifts the latch and turns out the wretched inmate, or forces him to sell his birth-right for a mess of pottage, makes the necessaries of life the instruments of oppression or vengeance, and poisons every manly sentiment of the soul in the first germ of existence.

Better, better, I say, a thousand times had it been for this land, had it still remained under the supremacy of Britain, if you be resolved to rest in your present condition. The aristocracy of Ireland and the despotism of Britain, counteracted each other, and the opposition of their private interests was often productive of the public good. The people stood in the situation of arbiter in the dispute, preserved a sort of balance of power, and by being always made the ostensible motive of contention, sometimes were the chief gainers in the contest. When the oligarchy talked high and haughtily at the castle, the executive power became patriotic, in order to shew, that, by courting popularity the machine of state might move on without their assistance ; and when government stood out in the bargain, the grand pensioners ranged themselves on the side of the people ; the mercenaries of state threw up their commissions, and went a volunteering in the service of the common-weal. The pensioned slave, that used to cower behind the benches, came forward and rolled his eyes and beat his breast ; and the pack-afs of successive administrations has sometimes rejected his provender, and miraculously brayed out an eulogium upon liberty. Thus popular acts were often passed from the mere spirit of party, and perhaps this country had not brow-beat England so successfully, had not the aristocracy of the land supported the voices of the million—and for what purpose ? not to promote the power of the people, but to strengthen *their own* :
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our government was indeed a strange incongruous mass of Irish aristocracy and English usurpations oddly huddled together, but still safer for the people, than when one of those hostile powers sits sole sovereign, holding the sceptre of supremacy in its hand, and treading the rights of the people beneath its feet.

The fact in short is, the people of Ireland may trade in order to raise money sufficient for an aristocracy to purchase that corruption which secures their own authority; and you must labour with the sweat of your brows, like the Egyptians of old, to raise a pyramid in which the majesty of your king, and the splendor of his crown, must be buried for ever. If you be resolved to do nothing more in the question of reform, meet, I beseech you, for one purpose. Meet in order to appoint an embassy who may prostrate themselves before the insulted majesty of the British parliament, and petition to be once more sheltered by their abdicated omnipotence. Let the prayer of your petition be like the groans of the Britons to the Consul Ætius—"We were driven," you may say, "from foreign usurpation to domestic tyranny. We are now driven back again, and in our choice of evil, we wish to be swallowed in the depths of despotism rather than suffer the slow poison administered by our own countrymen. Forgive our apostacy—we abjure every doubt entertained of your infallibility, and all we ask is to die in the *euthanasia* of absolute monarchy."

My country! My country! My heart sinks within me—my eyes grow womanish when I think of thy situation.

Long and sorely oppressed by the left-handed policy of a sister kingdom, labouring under every corruption in thy domestic government, deprived of all internal police, plundered by rapacious landholders, deserted by thy wealthiest citizens, over-

looked by a British senate, ridiculed by thy own, despised by thy K——, and abandoned in despair by thy children!

Yet still amidst these evils, I feel a melancholy pleasure in pronouncing, that your most serious consideration will lead you to deduce the grievances of this country from perhaps a single cause. A trade confined by general regulation, or local suspension, injured the interest; a legislature, unwilling to assert its own exclusive jurisdiction, wounded the honour of the nation. A custom—for the evil rested rather on usage than law—of introducing or recognizing as members of government, bodies of men unknown to the constitution, or official partizans of of prerogative, was a great grievance. A standing army supported by the people, yet independent of the people, was a measure pregnant with ruin. These excrescences lopt off, the root still remains. The *Hydra* of national calamity has many heads but only *one heart*. While that heart remains, you may lop off every head as it springs, but others will still rise in its place. This great political evil engenders and nourishes the rest. Why entangle your understandings with researches into the musty records of antiquity? why perplex yourselves with the professional subtlety of the law? Here is the origin of evil; you hear of it abroad—you see it at your doors:—the people are lost, if they do not at present speak, and write, and act with all the energy which the spirit of the constitution warrants. It is not the temporizing expedient of repealing this or that law, or removing this or that minister, which can yield substantial and enduring redress to the ills of the nation; and if I be asked, who are the agents powerful enough to effectuate the work of reform, I lay my hand upon my heart, and I answer, *Yourselves*. God forbid, that while the constitution warrants peaceable, yet efficacious means of redress, any Irishman should countenance the vindication

cation of our rights by the doubtful and dreadful decision of the sword : but it is the duty of an Irishman to remark, that if any people from irresolution, want of integrity, criminal neutrality, or causeless despair, should neglect to employ those means which *all the laws that are left them* have placed in their power, that people is not entitled to lament the loss of liberty, *which it deserves to lose.*

O R E L L A N A.

L E T T E R IV.

FELLOW-SLAVES,

ANSWER me one question ? If you be languid in the PURSUIT of reform, would you not be equally so in the ENJOYMENT of it ? Are you ABLE to be free ? Be assured, that if it be laborious to attain liberty, it is laborious to maintain it. The spirit of a nation *able* to be free, must be a haughty and magnanimous spirit, strenuous, vigilant, vindictive, always impatient, often impetuous, sometimes inexorable. There is a spirit in man. There is a spirit in nations ; and the inspiration of the Almighty gives some nations understanding to know the value of freedom, ardour to pursue it through surrounding difficulties, and energy to maintain it. The reform, if obtained at this instant, might only serve to accumulate disgrace upon your heads, and make you a laughing-stock to Europe.

I fear your present indolence and irresolution :

they hang about my heart with a melancholy foreboding and prescience that you are too impotent to *possess* a reform, that you have not, as it were, the nerves and muscles to bear it. If, at this time, you do not exert yourselves in a manner worthy of the sublime object which you have in view, *I pray to Almighty God, that whatever may be the lot of posterity, YOU YOURSELVES may NEVER obtain a reformed constitution.* Did the concession of the ministry at this moment present the nation with a reform bill *in a gold box*, I should accept it, as an Irishman, with a reluctance bordering upon disgust: when I reflected that my countrymen might only divert themselves for a little time with the blessing as children with a toy. I declare I should be sorry that any minister brought about the redemption of a nation which ought to redeem itself; and if it does not redeem itself, is not worthy of redemption.

Must a mighty nation stand gaping for the wind which blows them the news of one man going into a *closet*, and another man coming out? Must the genius of the *Irish* constitution stand, like a blind harper, at the door of a man in office, till the porter bids him go about his business.

Perhaps this young minister *knows you*, my countrymen, better than you know yourselves. His experience in human nature, and the history of the world, will lead him to remark, that there is a distinction of rank among nations as well as among individuals; and that although some states rise by their own efforts far above the vulgar level of what may be called the mob of nations, appearing to the world as if the overbearing and impracticable spirit of his mighty *Father* had been melted down and diffused through the land;—yet, the generality of men, in different states, are sufficiently happy if they be permitted to *eat*, to *drink*, to *sleep* and to *propagate*. He might observe, that *these* seem to have been the only objects of national ambition in
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this island for centuries past, and that when the strange lunacy of the moment is over, they will continue our only goods for centuries to come. He may assure us, that his principles and his wishes would lead him to gratify the good people of Ireland in all their reasonable desires, but that he knows not as yet whether the expression of these desires be not merely the fugitive productions of the day, born only to buzz for a few hours, and then to perish in the stream of oblivion.—That we were at present in a state of PROBATION for freedom: That Providence, which often chuses to throw obstacles in the way of a nation situated as ours is at present, merely as *trials* of its strength and resolution to bear what it has boldness enough to demand, may have designed to use *himself* and his *associates* as instruments in his hands, *external* obstacles, which may prove whether the nation has permanent effience *within itself* sufficient to entitle it to the rank of a Free-People. That on this account solely, from the purest concern for the interests of humanity, which must be materially injured by our inability to maintain, with any credit to ourselves, the great object of our desires, and with silent and secret wishes, that by a heroism becoming candidates for such a prize, we may approve ourselves to our king and to our God, worthy of a reform; he takes the resolution to act, as a prime minister alway acts, and hopes at the same time, that your admiration of *his* abilities, will not lead you so far as to make you forget the use of *your own*.

I think, my countrymen, that the attainment of national freedom ought always to be made in a *progressive* manner, in order to train a people as it were to manhood: but I think, at the same time, that this progression ought to move on with a velocity *accelerated* in proportion as the nation approaches the object which attracts it. The youngest among you will easily mark the different steps in this progress, from
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laying the first stone at Dungannon, until the meeting of the last Convention: but the oldest among you is too apt to forget the indissoluble *connexion* between those steps and the mutual support which they give to each other.—I might dwell with pleasure on the regular and beautiful gradation of persevering virtue, which has of late raised this country to a name among nations; but I wish rather to appeal to your memory, for it is too soon, I hope, to commence your historian. Let the man who is fatigued in the ascent, *look back*, and pretend to admire the prospect—I wish only that you may recollect how every part of this business has been, as it were, cemented with what went before, and to what came after. I wish to caution you from resting the weight and magnitude of this mighty matter upon any SINGLE occurrence, but that taking the whole under one comprehensive view, you may be less disappointed in the failure of any one part, and rest with perfect confidence, that if you do not desert *yourselves*, you will soon behold the completion of the work. I should wish particularly to impress you with the belief, that this assembly of delegates is nothing more or less than a continuation of the Convention which assembled in the year 1783; and that as the *object* of the nation continues the same; as the *agents* who are interested in the attainment of this object are the same; as the *motives* become every day more pressing; and as the *means* put into practice are the same constitutional means, strengthened by repetition and variation of form and character, the same eagerness should spread from breast to breast, to make that assembly, which is about to meet, an illustrious proof, that the majesty of the people has hitherto put forth only *half* its strength.

The Convention in 1783 assembled as Volunteers, with no design of relinquishing, for a moment, the name of Citizen, but from a desire of adding constitutional energy to that sacred title, by uniting the
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characters of Citizen and Soldier, cementing them together in one common and consistent appellation. When these guardians of domestic peace, these protectors of your liberties and lives, were opprobriously used, they observed a majestic and expressive silence, a silence that spoke feelingly to the hearts of the people, and said, " We armed in your defence; we placed this nation in a guarded quiet, dreadful to its foes. We have been the life-guards of the constitution, and richly have we been paid by your—applause. Let us dissolve; we appeal to the people of Ireland to justify our characters, vindicate our cause, and restore our fame."—You then, my countrymen, are now called upon for your verdict in this momentous cause. Your SILENCE is a contrite confession that all which has been done was rebellion, that every volunteer is an out-law, and every county meeting a conventicle. The father may then call his son an assassin, and the son may call his father a traitor. The whole nation must in this case be acknowledged a nest of private and public iniquity.—Speak, then, if you do not chuse to have the reputation and fair fame of your friends and kindred destroyed before your eyes. Speak, if you do not wish to be employed as mutes to strangle your children with a bow-string.—Yes! I speak warmly, because I am deeply interested. I glory in being enthusiastic. I pity the man who can discuss such a question as a problem in mathematics, and when he triumphs in his argument walks off *convinced* and *contented*. This nation will never obtain its object, till it joins the ardour of love to the composure of political philosophy. I therefore call upon my countrymen, by every serious and solemn adjuration, to rivet in their memories all that has been done already in the pursuit of a Parliamentary Reform, and to connect it closely to, and strongly with, the present moment.

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The Arch of Liberty is nearly finished ; one stone hangs upon another. Each supports and is supported. The *key-stone* is just ready to be put in—without it, all must give way. *The abandonment of the present CIVIL CONVENTION, is the abandonment of Reform.*

I will suppose—what may Heaven avert—that the business of reform is suspended for a time.—What follows ?—The whole work must be begun anew. Every man who has stretched himself by the fireside, must be again called forth and goaded into action. County meetings must be summoned—committees appointed—provincial assemblies convened, and after a length of time, there is a possibility that the nation may recover the same vantage ground which it *possesses at this moment*. I say, a *possibility*, for the probability is, that the present opportunity lost, will never be regained ; and that a month or two may ruin what a life time will not be able to restore. The reason is, that we act at *present* with the collected power of every Dungannon meeting, of every other provincial assembly, of the late convention, of 50,000 Volunteers, of the wisest and best men in both kingdoms, all condensed into the golden NOW ; which must therefore invest the delegates of present appointment with a potency formed from the combination of all these preceding authorities, with its own.

It is only by viewing the origin and *progression* of the different means employed for accomplishing a reform, that we can overlook any blunders which have been made in the work. I consider the aggregate meeting of Dublin as a coarse stone in the arch which juts out a little from the rest, but which, notwithstanding, filled up a *vacancy* when a better was not to be had, and prevented that *interruption* and *suspension* in the undertaking, which might have been attended with the most dangerous consequences. Why was there such a vacancy ?—Ask yourselves !

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Why did the dregs of democracy rise to the surface?—Ask those rich, respectable, *honourable* gentlemen, why they, who came in so late, went out so early, and did not finish the work which they did *not* begin?

It is not the aggregate meeting who are to be blamed for voluntarily *exposing themselves* between you and the enemy, at a time when you did not think proper to act yourselves; but it was your own reproach, that you did not come forward to fill that station which they occupied with so much more zeal than ability. It is really curious to see how much petty political scandal has been cast upon those poor men, by a set of people employed in the character of gossips, to whisper away reputations, and blast with their baleful breath the most innocent and inoffensive characters: I could, at this instant, set some of these pestilential parts of human society in the pillory of the press, to furnish sport for the grinning multitude; but while satire lifts up her sharp and shining weapon, she disdains the prostrate foe, and draws it back again *dry*.

It is not the persons who propose, but the thing proposed, that ought to claim the attention of a people, obliged as we are, to use various means, some more dignified than others, in the promotion of our great national good. It is not the name which ought to alarm us, but the subject-matter which ought to animate and excite us. I must allow that the letters C. O. N. G. R. E. S. S. are magic letters of themselves, sufficient to rise an apparition before the eyes of a guilty minister,—an apparition that will seem to draw his curtains in the dead of night and rouse him from his pillow: but surely, there cannot be a more modest assemblage of letters than those which compose the word Convention. The aggregate of Dublin were indeed ill able, for a moment, to sustain the weight of this important business. Your cause, countrymen, loses nothing by
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the acknowledgment; but if you do not treat their successors with adequate respect, *you have lost YOUR ALL*. For who is it that NOW summon you into convention? Not the aggregate surely! You are called upon by *the choicest of your countrymen!—relations!—and friends!* You are adjured by a regard to *your own consistency*; by all the hopes you entertain of the future prosperity of your country! by your ancestors, and by your posterity; by the characters of liberty, and by the genius of the constitution!

—They adjure you in the name of the best and wisest characters in both kingdoms; in the name of those illustrious citizens of the world, who throughout Europe are sending up to Heaven the devout aspirations of the heart for your success; by the blood which has been lavished through the annals of your history in the assertion of liberty; by the soul of the immortal Locke; and the spirit of REFORM, which dictated the terms of the revolution; by that glorious INNOVATION on the customary rules of succession, which placed the crowns of three kingdoms on the head of a German elector,—they adjure you to move on with indissoluble firmness, irresistible union, and heroic ardour, to the final accomplishment of your glorious purpose, by concentrating and condensing the will of a whole people into *one great assembly*.

To you, young men, I must address myself with warmth and with emphasis. The spirit of reform, like the spirit of youth, must be active, ardent, progressive, impassioned, enterprising, enthusiastic. Advanced age is of a heavy, inactive, procrastinating disposition, which always acts on the defensive, and wishes, like the veteran Fabius, to conquer BY DELAY. Such a disposition might serve to maintain liberty, but will never acquire it. The genius of reform must be attended with a certain gallantry of soul which pushes FORWARD in the field of virtuous glory. It is this gallantry of soul, like the
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white plume on the helmet of Henry the fourth of France, always seen in motion among the thickest of the enemy—which will inspire those who follow with confidence, and those who oppose you with despair. As years advance, men are apt to acquire a habit of accommodation to external circumstances, however humiliating: the noble powers of nature decay for want of use: the *beggarly* passions usurp and engross the heart, until at length such persons begin to think it a matter of necessity that they should shift merely for themselves, and leave their country to become the foot-ball of fortune. The love of country and mankind warms and dilates the youthful breast. Those expansive passions gradually contract their limits during the progress of life. They shrink into the petty squabbling of a petty party; and at length all that poor patriotism can do, is to issue out in the evening twilight, bluster a while at a club or a coffee-house, and then sneak again into the contracted circle of *self*. YOU are not yet benumbed with the trembling caution and commercial selfishness of the aged. This corrupted part of the globe has not yet contaminated the native honesty of your hearts. Your unadulterated spirit has all the raciness of generous and genuine growth, and tastes of the flavour of the soil. Dear and gallant souls! I wish to name you, man by man! I know many among you, and I wish to embrace you all in a holy brotherhood of affection. I wish to join my hands with yours, and to swear at the altar of the constitution, that by that Being whom we adore, we will never abandon our country. Look! I think I see your parent country, standing like a Spartan mother at your side, hiding the tear that trembles in her eye, and indignantly pointing to the ruins of a constitution which her virtuous sons alone can restore to its original grandeur. Let your PAST ACTIONS rise before your eyes like the shades of your ancestors, and summon you to consistency. Let
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what you *have done* only serve to usher in and announce what you are to do. Think of those whom you are opposing, and tremble, lest you suffer yourselves to be defeated by officers of the revenue; by excise-gatherers; by collectors, agents, attornies, starving expectants, placemen and pensioners. When Cambyzes of Persia warred against Egypt, he placed a number of cats and dogs in the front of his army, and the simple Egyptians sacrificed the honour of their country, rather than injure the objects of their superstition. If there be a pulse of life remaining in your breasts, in the same instant that you throw this paper out of your hands, go and devote yourselves for a little hour to the service of your dear and native land. Go, call your friends together. Draw up a requisition for the convention of the county in which you live. Subscribe it; send it to the press.—Go, and *be free*.

ORELLANA.

L E T T E R V.

FELLOW-SLAVES,

THE man who just a moment before beheld the last agonies of a departed friend, and heard his groan of expiration, is sometimes seen to maintain with all the violence of passion that he is not *yet* dead. The survivor hangs over the poor breathless body, and thinks or affects to think that there is still an ear to hear, an eye to see, and a tongue to speak. But as soon as the cold hand drops down like lead, and the

the light of life sinks for ever from the eyes; when the human face divine becomes scarcely distinguishable in form or feature, and all hastens to the first stage of corruption, the same man strives in vain to overcome an instinctive disgust, quits the once loved but now loathsome object, resigns it to earth, and all that remains behind is—*remembrance*. I watch my dearest country, at this moment, with the same anxious solicitude. I say within myself, Is it *possible*, she can be dead? Is it possible that all the fine feelings of human nature, all the patriotic fervour which so SHORT A TIME AGO, circulated, like the invigorating blood of life, thro' the remotest extremities of the land, can be frozen up in a moment? Can this sensible warm motion sink so suddenly into cold oblivion? Can the dilated spirit of the nation degenerate into a kneaded clod? Are these the hands which but yesterday drew the sword half out of the scabbard and dazzled our eyes with the shining weapons of war? No: She is *not* dead. I swear she is not. 'Tis only a death-like swoon. The pulse will again play;—the cheeks will glow;—the breath of life will be felt, and the spirit will return. Tell me not I am deceived. If I be so, 'tis a glorious deception and I wish to indulge it.

But what can be the CAUSE of this sudden and surprising suspension in every vital power; for the knowledge of the cause is essential to the CURE. No apparent alteration in the system of affairs has taken place to stupify, to divert, or to deceive. The transitory representatives of majesty have indeed shifted with more than usual celerity from shore to shore, but without impressing the public mind with much distinction of character or peculiarity of conduct. The last one always seems to hold a glass in which are seen the shades of his yet harmless successors, who wait on the farther side for their allotted time to dazzle our metropolis for some months with the glare of mimic majesty, and then to enter
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again their former station as humble satellities of the throne. The gentlemen who undertake to keep the *ruins* of the constitution *in repair*, fill up their different official departments with their accustomed fidelity, and aristocracy no longer affecting disguise, stalks like a Colossus over the land seeking whom it may devour, and furious for its prey. I do not think there is any radical defect in the heart of Irishmen, which is the cause of this wonderful stoppage in the circulation of public spirit, nor do I think there is such a derangement in your understanding as not to comprehend the perils of your present situation. The necessity of a reform is grown into a text which precedes your writings. It is the axiom of your argument; it is the proverb of conversation. It twines itself round your present and future welfare. It excites your ambition. It gratifies your love of glory and independence. It agitates and interests the noblest passions of your nature. What then, again I ask, can be the *cause* of this surprising calm? What evil power or passion has chained your tongues and fixed your eyes so stedfastly upon the ground; muddled your clear intelligence, and changed the very shape of your souls? Good God! Is it possible it can be RELIGION? Religion, that descended from Heaven to enlighten and enlarge the human mind, to melt down the ruggedness of barbarism into the unsuspicious intercourse, the sweet amœnity of civil life; and in place of those grim and horrid deities who delighted in the sanguine field, in the cries of the captive, and in human sacrifices, to set before our eyes HIM, the meek and merciful, who wept over Jerusalem.

When the author of that religion you *all* profess was told, that his mother and brethren were coming to seek him, he stretched forth his hand to the *multitude* which surrounded him, a multitude composed of Jews, Gentiles and Samaritans, and cried aloud, Lo! My Mother! My Sister! My Brother! I call upon

upon you, people of Ireland, in the name of Him, the Great Philanthropist,—of him who in the torments of crucifixion sighed out his last breath for the welfare of his enemies,—I call upon you, Churchmen, Presbyterians, and Catholics, to embrace each other in the mild spirit of christianity, and to unite as a sacred compact in the cause of your sinking country.—For you are ALL IRISHMEN—you are nurtured by the same maternal earth. The hand of Heaven has broken off this island from the continent, as if to preserve at least one *fragment* free, and has made it your common habitation. That same hand has scooped out your capacious harbours, deepened your ports, and sheltered them from the storms. It has chained down the hurricane lest it should ravage the land. It has commanded the power which shakes the earth and terrifies its guilty inhabitants, to be still. It has stifled the raging volcano and forbids the dreadful visitation of the pestilence. The gentle dews of Heaven drop fatness on your fields, and not even one venomous animal ventures to contaminate their verdure. Dare not to abuse the gifts of God, and shew that it is your *religion* to be FREE.—Dare not to continue in the blasphemy of servitude.

Is this a place, or is this *a time*, to blow the coals of persecution and awaken the discord of sects? Is this a time when the enemy has forced open the gates, when they are within the walls, when they have penetrated into the inner-most and most sacred recesses, torn down the awful veil, and placed their sacrilegious hands on the very ARK which consecrates our constitution, and makes it famous throughout the globe?—Is this a time to stir up civil turmoils, and to pour the poison of long-forgotten antipathies into the ears of the credulous?—Is this a time to summon up those dreadful ideas which had impressed themselves on our minds when children, and of consequence became associated with the first principles

principles of education, to make these spectres ascend in gloomy resurrection before our eyes and make us children again?—Is this a time for learned and venerable missionaries to run thro' the land preaching a *crusade*, when all should write, speak and act against the enemy *at our doors*? Have we not suffered enough already by an aristocracy of *power* to subject ourselves in this enlightened age, to the worst of aristocracies, an aristocracy of *opinion*? Is not this the time to display our zeal in politics, and our *moderation* in religion? Is not this the time to lull the agitation and beginning ferment of ecclesiastical discord with the balm of oblivion, before it sinks into the melancholy malignity of revenge, or is exalted into that raging phrenzy which tears down with convulsive strength every bolt and bar that opposes it, and then roams at large in all the wildness of desperation? Is not every Demon who wishes to blast the fairest prospect of human happiness, grinning at this instant, with infernal glee, when he sees that we are ourselves destroying the fruit of six years labour, and setting our luxuriant harvest in a blaze without *his* assistance?—Oh! let me conjure those among the different descriptions of religion, whether of the established Church, of the Presbyterian or Catholic persuasion, who know the imperfection of all human institutions—let me conjure them, at this most trying hour, to form one grand association, one great fund of virtue, good sense and patriotism which may yet sustain our tottering credit, as a people; and rescue from the jaws of ruin our almost bankrupt reputation.—There is, in each of these classes of Christians, a select few, who have one common object in contemplation, but who are kept apart from each other by the doubts and jealousies of their forefathers, which are as it were engrafted into their sweet and generous natures. When once out of the sphere of attraction, a repulsion takes place; this soon becomes aversion, and that as soon degenerates into
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all the rancour of sectaries. Asperity of conversation generates constraint in behaviour, and makes them blind to that philanthropy which all of them may in different degrees possess, and which ought to be the bond and cement of their union. Jealousies when once revived run like wildfire through the lower ranks of the community, as nothing is so inflammable as the tinder of religion; and thus their heads and hearts are diverted from every, even the most favourite object. It is then doubly incumbent upon those in all persuasions who are too tenacious of their liberty, to be drawn into the vortex of a sect, to form a social compact, which may yet reclaim the wandering eyes of the multitude, dissipate their causeless fears, and fix their attention solely upon REFORM. Blessed be the man who, in times such as these, falls like the affectionate Joseph on the neck of his brethren, however different in character or situation, and kisses them, and weeps aloud, and says—I AM THY BROTHER.

Such men, alas! are few in most descriptions of religion, and to this few, I must address myself, for *their* junction will give them the strength of many. The *multitude*, in every religion, have strong antipathies. Such antipathies are natural, and I will venture to say useful. They arise from a strong predilection to the principles of their own persuasion, without which men are apt to grow indifferent to religion at all. They give mankind extraordinary firmness of spirit upon trying emergencies, and they are accompanied with that severity in practice and strictness of conduct, which generally flow from strength of conviction and rigour of doctrine. This stiff and uncompliant cast of character is sometimes apt to grow sharp, acrimonious, cruel and ferocious. Then is the time for men whose hearts are distended with the god-like feeling of philanthropy, to cast themselves between those sects that seem even to

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threaten hostility ; then is the time to dispel the mists from the eyes of their infatuated countrymen, and to let them see their enemies lying in close ambuscade, while you—yes, I say you—are murdering in dreadful mistake your harmless friends, and fighting for your bitterest foes. The great misfortune of the Catholic religion in this country arises from this circumstance, that there is little or no distinction of rank among its professors, and of consequence few men of weight and estimation to sweeten that leaven of intolerance and persecution, which in other persuasions is not perhaps less in quantity, but is well *tempered* by numbers in the middle and superior ranks of life ; who gently instill into the minds of those beneath them, the milk of human nature.

—It is chiefly on this account that the Catholics at this day are absolutely INCAPABLE of making a good use of political liberty, or what is the same thing, of political *power*. I speak the sentiments of the most enlightened among them, and I assert it as a fact, that the most able men in that body are too wise to wish for a *complete* extension of civil franchises to those of their own persuasion ; and the reason is, because they well know that it must require the process of time to enlarge their minds and meliorate their hearts into a *capability* of enjoying the blessing of freedom. If *your* best friends doubt whether *you yourselves* be capable of enjoying a reform, the most liberal among the Catholics must know the greater insufficiency of their brethren,—and hence their silence upon the subject. Their acquiescence in what has been said and done in their favour proceeded only from that secret wish for liberty so natural to the human heart ; but their *tacit* acquiescence evinces a mixture of desire and dread proceeding from a consciousness that they were not *able* to be free. I assert it as a fact, that the leading men among the Catholics did not *begin* to agitate this
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unhappy question. It was *forced* upon them by men whose goodness of intention is the best excuse they can make for their want of fore-knowledge; and who have unconsciously supplied the enemies of reform with the means of warding off the otherwise irresistible impulse of public opinion. Let then every man among you, know, that the Catholics have withdrawn their claim of civil franchise, and that they do it because the business of reform must be retarded rather than promoted by their interference. I rejoice that there is not the shadow of excuse left for YOUR indolence or inattention. I rejoice that I am now writing a sentence which will manifest to him WHO IS YET UNBORN, that the success or failure of reform is to be your proper and peculiar glory, or your everlasting condemnation. May this sentence live, when the hand that writes it is mouldering in the dust, to tell wondering posterity, that after the Catholics had withdrawn every claim on the justice or generosity of their country, for the welfare of their Protestant brethren,—the Protestants themselves abandoned without the shadow of a cause, the glorious object just within their grasp; became exhausted, spiritless, afflicted, fallen, and then sunk into the grave tormented by the agonizing reflection of what might have been done, and haunted by the ghost of their departed grandeur.

The question of reform is therefore to be considered merely as a *political* question, and he—I care not who he be—that intermixes aught of religion in the matter, is from ignorance, from simplicity, or from design—an enemy to his country. The question is not whether a reform, attended by an equal participation of civil rights with the Catholics, is better or worse than to continue without a reform;—I may answer *worse*, if I chuse to wander from the question, which is simply and solely this,—whether the government of Ireland is to continue an *oligarchy*,

or to become a limited monarchy : whether a few men are to return the legislative and chain the executive beneath their feet, or are the people to rescue the rights of the *crown* from pollution, and to vindicate their *own*. The Catholics, I again repeat it with exultation, have declined all share of the contest ; and conscious that the plurality among them are placed as it were in an earlier stage of society than the rest of the island, they submit in silence to the necessity of situation and circumstance—waiting with patience until time has given them maturity of strength, and ability equal to the arduous object they wish to attain. I do not think it at all surprizing that an enlightened Catholic, on seeing his Protestant brother almost certain of possessing a reform, should exclaim with Esau, “ Is there not *one* blessing left ? Bless me, even me also, O ! my country ; ” but when that same man considers calmly his situation, he resigns himself to the sentence of fate, and *for a time* is content to serve his brother. May that time be made a short one by their own laudable exertions ! May the light of true science illuminate their minds and soften their hearts ! May the gradual diffusion of property, while it engrafts their affections upon the soil which support them, communicate at the same time a spirit to maintain what their industry has acquired ; give them self-estimation, conscious dignity, and in short that republicanism of soul, which will announce to the world, that the people who possess it are stamped by the hand of Heaven, heirs of independence !

A reform in parliament, dear countrymen, is not merely the removal of an evil. It must prove a never failing fund of positive and substantial blessings, which with respect to Protestants would be immediate, and to Catholics, eventual. The public mind, by being frequently brought into action, must grow better informed : the latent powers and energies

energies of every individual that enjoyed the blessing, would be brought into action, for there is sympathy between all the noble principles of our nature. The heat of public spirit would foster and bring into the light of day those seeds of science, which at present germinate but to die in the breasts of indolent and unambitious men. The republic of letters, a name sacred in the mouths of every free people, a name pronounced with reverence in the courts of kings, would arise to illuminate the land. The mines of labour would be opened, and the mists of superstition would dissolve away. The fanaticism of sects would become an enthusiasm for civil freedom. We would all live like christians, and behave as countrymen. The Catholic soothed by favours, by the conveniencies of life, and by the hopes of affluence, would gradually melt into the citizen; the Presbyterian would acknowledge, that all sects when in possession of power have abused it: and the Churchman would find a nobler foundation for the security of the church than—the abuses of the constitution. The laws would inspect our actions, while our thoughts were left to God.

O THOU, who hast showered down on this fair and fertile island so many gifts of thy kind Providence, dispose the hearts of ALL its inhabitants to improve the blessings of nature, by crowning them with liberty, the richest possession and brightest ornament of humanity. We ask for those rights from others which we received at our birth from Thee, who made our bodies erect and our souls immortal, rational, and divine;—let us not be surprized at this hour with the stroke of death, and return into thy presence stript and despoiled of those precious gifts which were the glory of our natures. At a time like this, it is very terrible to die. If we cannot live like men, we indeed deserve to die like slaves—but spare us—good God! spare us for a little, that we may yet have an opportunity to vindicate the
human

human character ; and call our spirits to thyself in that glorious moment, when our cause is victorious and our country free. LET ME LIVE TO SEE THAT DAY, AND I SHALL EXPIRE WITHOUT A GROAN.

ORELLANA.

TO THE PUBLIC.

THE present great national question has divided you into four distinct classes. The *first* is composed of those who may be called, **SEDENTARY** reformers. These are amiable, but indolent characters, who yawn over the interesting argument, and woo their object with a sort of platonic passion, which is sufficiently gratified with hope, and is never very anxious for enjoyment. These men in higher life, are generally made use of as *toasts*, to fill up, among well-bred company, the vacancies of an after-dinner conversation. Their names move regularly round the peaceful orbit of the table, without scorching a single guest with the meteor glare of enthusiastic patriotism ; shedding only that serene and inoffensive light, which neither warms with its heat, nor dazzles with its effulgence. It is obliging however in these gentlemen, to lend the use even of their *names* to the community. They serve the same purpose as the paste-board effigies of heroes, which used to cheat the eyes of the ignorant populace, and eke out the procession of a Roman triumph. These are the men among you, who are always too modest to lead, too proud to follow, too wise to debate, too prudent to decide, too busy to be active, too young to resolve—or—too old to perform. These are the men, in lower stations, who, after convincing the conviction
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of their neighbour, sit quietly down with the sure and certain hope, that the full-fed commissioner, and meagre levee-hunter, will come and lay both possessions and promises at their feet.

A *second* class is composed of PRACTICAL and EFFICIENT reformers, who reduce philanthropy into action, join the animation of passion to the confidence of conviction, and with the wish to persuade, have also the power to propagate the principles they profess. There is one character among this number who moves along like a comet portending nothing but blood, fixing the gaze of the multitude, and perplexing monarchs with the fear of revolutions. Yet his course is determined notwithstanding its apparent eccentricity. It is the rapidity of accelerated motion which increases his resplendence, and his magnitude augments as he approaches more nearly to the great and glorious object which attracts him.

In the *third* class are the ANTI-REFORMERS, a compact and well regulated body, who ground their obstinacy in argument on the incontrovertible axioms of *post, place, pension, and expectancy*; and who act most stoutly on the defensive, as men may be naturally supposed to do, who fight for their fortunes, and perhaps for their lives. These are the men who set such value on the ruins of constitution, that they denounce vengeance on the sacrilegious hands which would remove even the dust and rubbish from the sacred walls. These are they who conjure up the horrid images of civil war, massacres, pestilence and famine, to scare our women and our boys. These are they who are always sure to compliment their adversaries in argument with the title of restless spirits, desperadoes, innovators, and incendiaries. I remember I once took the liberty of expressing my surprize to a gentleman of this class during the time of dinner, that he would admit such things as potatoes to his table, which were known to support the lowest *dregs* of the people,
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and were indeed neither more or less than a *republican root*.

The *fourth* class may go under the name of NEUTRALS, a strange miscellaneous assemblage from all ranks and conditions of life. These characters, like the skin of the chameleon, take the colour of those objects which happen to surround them; and their actions, whenever they do act, are seldom uniform or decisive. This well-peopled class keep at present a sort of balance of power between the opposite parties. They are sought after as proselytes, and derive the first importance in the minds of both sides, by possessing a perfect indifference to either. These men are generally carried away as feathers on the prevailing tide of popular opinion; and it becomes, on this account, most incumbent on every strenuous advocate for reform, to act at the *present* moment in that decided manner, and to speak with that determined tone, which may fix the irresolute, and inspire the timid with confidence.

If the active partizans seem for one instant to stagger, the panic will fly like lightning, and all the *non-effectives*, who at present range themselves on the popular side and fill up the intervals, will desert in a body to the enemy. The *sedentary* reformers will sit still and look on, while we who remain, will be forced to walk under a yoke made of those very arms which we bore as volunteers and soldiers of the constitution. Such will be the inevitable consequence of procrastination, or of what has been lately disguised under the term *perseverance*. It is not the part of an experienced general to expose his main body, by the loss of his auxiliaries; and the fact is, that unless we support them, they will abandon us. Nor will the curse of inaction rest here!—Cowardice spreads by the same sympathy as courage.—The most forward will feel their spirits damped by the contagion of bad example. The breath
of

of corruption will then blow like the spirit-sinking Sirocco across the land. The sternest patriot will feel himself emasculated; and the sinewy strength of manly integrity will relax into the weakness of the woman.

It is then the bounden duty of every real friend of reform, at this important hour, to impel the *neutrals* forward, by shewing in themselves a resolution, spirit, and constancy, which is never damped by despondence; and to stimulate those of the first class into some degree of exertion, by flattery and popular honours. For this purpose you must appear to give credit to every able and needy adventurer who languishes for the title of patriot. It is the seeming credulity of the public which tempts *many* to the profession of patriotism; and the number that "strut and fret their hour upon this stage," compensates, in a great measure, for the want of perseverance in the individuals. The inflexible patriot of *to-day*, is stimulated into some act that may approve him worthy of the title, and is succeeded to-morrow by another obstinate Cato, who generously contributes his mite to the stock of public good; which by this means accumulates more by the number than the intrinsic value of such petty donations. Popular opinion may be said to establish a sort of insurance office for the virtue of men, and this office supports itself by the multitude of small adventures, notwithstanding the notorious fragility of the *material insured*. Were the glorious title of patriot to be wrung from the reluctant hand of the public, by a long and laborious apprenticeship in the service of the common-weal, scarcely a man, except a Flood, would put in for the prize; but when the splendid appellation is distributed with little selection, every one is eager to become an adventurer in this lottery, certain of an eventual fortune, because *one* man had the good luck of gaining 50,000l.

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I do not go willingly out of my way to mention that man. The labourer is worth his hire, and the spirit of a great nation ought to be above chaffering about *wages*. I believe him to be great even with his wages; but his best friends would have thought him greater without it; and he has gratified the malignity of his worst enemies, by sinking so much nearer the common level of humanity. If it be ever necessary to barter glory for gain, he deserved triple the sum he received. If such conduct must be rewarded with *money*, let millions be the inadequate reward; but even with the reward he has obtained from a country, comparatively speaking, as poor as he once was himself, this man can never stand up in his place with the dignity of crest which well became him as first creditor *of the nation*. His vivid genius, his eloquence, and literary merit, must give him reason to rank with any Roman—of the Augustan age; but in the earlier periods of that Republic, the members of the senate-house possessed a sort of PROUD COMPETENCE, which rendered the tone of their eloquence deep, energetic, and irresistible. I know not whether this grand pensionary of the people be corrupted, but corrupt men will flatter themselves in thinking him so; and perhaps flatter him till they make him so. In the insidious progress of self-deception, his patriotic feelings, which *at this time* ought to be aroused to action, will *unconsciously to himself* grow less exquisite and irritable. His present pettishness against the people, will degenerate into asperity and acrimony: these will at length terminate in disgust; and every little selfish passion will find leisure and room to unfold itself. The bird of Jove, which had grasped the thunderbolt and borne the lightning of Heaven—when caught and chained down in a cage, forgets its ambitious flights, and with flagging wing, and lack lustre eye, bears the insults of every coward boy, and furnishes sport for every menial of the castle.

You

You are to consider a patriot in no other light than as an instrument employed by the people for a certain purpose, and when this instrument becomes rotten, another must be substituted in its stead; but in the *question of reform*, which of all political questions is most purely the matter of the people, nothing can be more dangerous than to rest with assured confidence upon any set of men; particularly upon men of shining abilities, and consequently of great ambition. In this national subject, the more closely the matter comes before the nation in SELF-convention, the better will it be managed; and the more fortunate will be its issue. When the native, genuine, homely spirit of the people is raised into local meetings—then transferred to provincial assemblies—to conventions—and to convention-committees, I always imagine that in these repeated distillations, as they may be called, something of the original taste and flavour is, perhaps indeed *necessarily*, destroyed. The subject matter, by all this rectification and straining, becomes in truth very rational and very refined; while those who agitate it become very polite, diffident, ductile and unassuming. The enemies of reform, on this very account, lose all their former terrors, and now pretend to make a jest of that power, as a hobgoblin, which before they had dreaded as the avenging spirit of an injured people. In short, it is the piercing cry of oppressed human-nature, conscious of its strength and impatient of injury, which startles the stoutest champion among your enemies.

If the nation *feels* the want of a representation in parliament, it will speak as if it *had feeling* of the grievance; and if it does not speak feelingly, the acute reasoners on the opposite side will naturally deduce it as the strongest presumption that there is no grievance felt. "We are very ready," they may say with an ironical sneer, "to do every thing for the greatest happiness of the greatest number; because we pay

pay the highest respect to the majesty of the people. It is a term which always sounds pleasant in our ears ; but we really acknowledge ourselves at a loss to know whether you be **SERIOUS** in your present requisitions. You looked, indeed, at *Dungannon*, as if you were not *making game*, and we recollect that your red-coats had the same effect on us at that time, as the terrific terms of raw-head and bloody-bones had upon us when children. But our nerves are now a little better strung. We shall allow that you played the counterfeit incomparably well, and we give you full credit for the whole as a super-excellent *joke* : We therefore pardon it as a diverting piece of wagghery ; for surely you cannot be so simple as to imagine, that we are to quit our ancient rights and indubitable possessions, for the frolicksome tricks of *a jester*, or the bravado of *a bully*—we can practise the game of *brag* as well as you."

I must say that these gentlemen have reason in their argument. I must accompany them still farther, and maintain, that their concessions have always been fully adequate to your exertions, and that government has always approved itself ready to give when you had the inclination to ask. The ruling power has ever met you half-way ; and so far from being obstinate, has been wonderfully gracious and facile —Would you have it to forsake all the modesty and decorum of spotless and uncontaminated innocence, clasp you round the neck and stifle you with embraces?—Would you have it come, like the spiritless Queen of Sheba, to Solomon, and moved by the bare **REPORT** of your depth of wisdom and magnitude of power, throw shekels of of fine gold and heaps of precious stones at your feet?—No ;—There is an obsequious majesty in *g*——t which would be woo'd, and not unsought be won. When you took up arms as Volunteers, were you not legalized by the authority of two **estates** of the legislature ; and was the silent acquiescence

escence of *the third*, aught else than the *speechless* rapture of a happy parent, who looks with delight on his martial offspring—When you met at Dunggannon, were not messengers sent to wait at your doors, and to return on the spur of the moment, with the result of your deliberations? Did any of these men at that time enter the meeting, and with a tribunitial V E T O put a stop to its proceedings? When you *resolved*—did not they *perform*? Did not expresses upon expresses stimulate the dilatory cabinet of Britain to accede to your demands; and as if it was always feared that the last express might fall sick or get drunk upon the road, did not the Secretary himself, fly like a Mercury from the Council-Board, and rising in his place, beseech the British senate to comply with your reasonable desires? Did they not comply? When you were informed that the repeal of the Declaratory Act was an insufficient tenure for legislative independence,—that the liberties of a nation were not to hang upon implication, deduction, the virtue of a negation, or the loop of expediency—but were to be secured by a record composed of characters positive, marked, and notorious, large enough to be read by the multitude, and deep enough to resist the injuries of time; that the basis of eternal agreement could not be too strong and explicit; and that repeal was merely *retrospective*, while renunciation, like the god of PEACE, had one face turned to the time past, and another that looked into futurity; did not you testify your wishes for renunciation, and did not renunciation take place? Was not your very countenance watched before the words escaped from your lips, and were not your wishes anticipated while they were yet rising from the bottom of your hearts? If you have any grievance remaining SPEAK and tell what they are. Is government obliged to *divine* your complaints? Where then is the seat of your pain? What noble part has it affected? Is it your head or your heart?

You

You sigh and you tremble—are you so oppressed with violence of disease that it has robbed you of utterance?—Speak!—Speak!—if there be yet a spark of life stirring within you, I conjure you in the name of God to speak, and if you *cannot*, hold up your hand.

—SHE DIES WITHOUT A SIGN!

Put yourselves, my countrymen, in the place of administration, and you will find that they act with the strictest propriety. You have made a new requisition through the medium of the Volunteer Convention. That Convention, however, represented only a part of the people. In such a national matter as reform, it is the nation which ought to speak. Ministry are too patriotic to listen to a part when the interests of the whole are concerned. They deny that the Volunteers express the sense of the people, and assert, that they are a set of delegates, who have usurped the right of speaking for the people without their consent, and disdaining their controul: That therefore it is the duty of every *patriot* to bring about the only substantial *reform*, by driving those usurpers from the seats which they have polluted, and that they, I say the MINISTRY, throw themselves on the wisdom and magnanimity of the people *in the largest sense of that word*, to justify their patriotic conduct at the present momentous crisis—ON THE TWENTIETH OF JANUARY, 1785, will this great appeal be determined.

For my own part I cannot speak upon this subject, as I happen to enjoy at present the office of petty constable, and I have no inclination to encounter a summary civil process, or to be found guilty of a misdemeanor, and perhaps of constructive high treason. YOU may speak, for I know not of any established precedent in the courts of law for issuing out a writ of attachment against—a NATION; or for citing two millions of people for *contempt of court* to be condemned or acquitted by an oath of exculpation. Perhaps indeed every man is to be accounted a

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K—'s officer, on the same account that he is supposed to be his tenant ; and his M. may be as much lord of the *souls* of his subjects as he is of the *soil*.

The favour of the sovereign, says the most eloquent of Historians, may command power : the esteem of the people only, can command authority. Under that authority you are now called upon to act. If there be no other means of assembling in your counties than by the requisition of a Sheriff ; and if the sheriff does this with an attachment hanging over his head, it is not to be expected that you will find among the number a Decius who will devote himself for the good of his country. YOU are to act—and the Volunteers of this nation are to be tried by GOD and by THEIR COUNTRY.

But still I fear for the event !——Ireland is yet a child. There is sometimes seen in ricketty children an extraordinary forwardness of mental powers, which surprizes every one with its strength, acuteness and comprehension. The nurse wonders, and the parents expect that the little one will turn out a prodigy. Every thing seems learned by instinct and intuition.—Gradually its powers weaken, its faculties shrivel up. It loses all its fiery spirit, its glowing ambition ; and the little wonder of the world at length *lives a SIMPLETON and dies A SOT*.

A PETTY CONSTABLE.

LETTER

L E T T E R VI.

FELLOW-SLAVES !

THERE is a certain TERM fixed by the hand of Providence, which sets a limit to the misfortunes as well as to the prosperity of a people. This terminating period sometimes happens in a season when it was least expected, and mocks the boasted sagacity of the second-sighted politician. The cloud which he supposed must burst in ruin upon the heads of millions, silently disperses, or falls gently down in the dew of amity and peace. The present may perhaps be a period of this kind. But who is the power that, under Providence, can procure us liberty and peace? the SOVEREIGN; that auspicious power which is always to be supposed wakeful for the public good, and which delights to blend justice with mercy. The hope of this propitious intercession gladdens my soul. I forget, for one happy moment, that I am the slave of slaves; and using the privilege of the Saturnalian season, I place the cap of liberty on my head, and holding the olive branch in my hand, I presume to address myself in the name of this nation,

To the KING of GREAT-BRITAIN
and IRELAND.

SIR,

WITH the zealous loyalty of affectionate subjects to a gracious Sovereign, whose throne is established in the hearts of his people, we presume to approach the common father of the empire. We approach him with that honest confidence which becomes us as
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the brethren of Britons, and the co-heirs of Magna Charta. We beseech him to listen with benignity to his loyal people of Ireland, who are ready with their lives and fortunes to defend the rights of royalty, and will make the same sacrifice rather than relinquish their own. Suffer us, great and good Sir, without encroaching on our respect and veneration for the monarch, to address your feelings as a man. Let other nations invest their Sovereigns with the attributes of omnipotence, and fall down like servile idolators before the workmanship of their own hands.—Our King is not the object of superstition, but of love. We address your Majesty, not in the prone posture of impious adoration, but casting our eyes with delight on the graciousness of your countenance, we view you with all the warmth of personal affection. Your illustrious house may well be called—**THE FAMILY OF THE PEOPLE**. The images of your ancestors are enshrined in our hearts, and memory sheds a sort of sacred and religious light over the long-departed dead. We did not hesitate to place the crown of this kingdom on the heads of foreigners, who were so closely related to this country by the fellowship of freedom; but on you, dear Sovereign, we look with patriotic partiality, and the attachment of loyalty is condensed into domestic affection. Never shall that day be obliterated from our remembrance, when your Majesty in ascending the throne, declared, that born and educated in this country, you gloried in the name of Briton. We come before you in the obeisance of our hearts and in the anguish of our souls. We come to pour out our complaints as children to a parent, and by the prevailing power of this pathetic appellation, we think ourselves secure of *your* favourable attention. We beseech you as a man, who can feel for the sufferings of humanity; as an illustrious patriot, whose life is the public care; as a King, whose private happiness must be the public glory; but above all,—as a

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father,

father, to look upon the larger family that now addresses you, with a smile of paternal condescension. FATHER OF THE PEOPLE, hear their prayers!

An intimate acquaintance with the history of the constitution will demonstrate to your Majesty, that this, like other human institutions, is liable to decay and declension. The constitution emerged at first from the same deluge of feudal barbarism which overspread all the nations of Europe; and while most of these nations rose for a little to sink again into the baseness of servility, your people, by their insular situation, the spirit of their ancestors, the succession of fortunate circumstances, and the restorative virtue of revolutions, became the rightful inheritors of a system and plan of government, founded on the rights of human nature and the principles of freedom. The abuses incident to every human government, that carries within itself the seeds of corruption, were always corrected by a recurrence to those first principles which through the lapse of time had been neglected or forgotten. This occasional recurrence produced a sort of political regeneration, counteracted the devastations of time, and re-animated the genius of the common-weal. It is this recurrence alone which can preserve the due temperament of the three estates, and apportion to each their adequate share of intrinsic power and external influence. The constitution is a pyramid of matchless workmanship, founded on the broad base of democracy, and ascending with due gradation, until the image of the Sovereign is exalted upon its height and terminates its elevation. No overhanging part ought to endanger its stability: No enormous power ought to destroy its just proportion.

To preserve THE BALANCE OF POWER among the nations of Europe was not the chief glory of Britain. Her chief glory was, and is, to preserve the BALANCE of FREEDOM within herself. From this originated the greatness of her empire, the
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virtue and valour of her people, her extended fame, and her domestic prosperity. When the nations that drooped beneath the yoke of despotism heard the British thunder roar on their remotest shores, they wondered that the limited monarch of a little island could stretch an arm so powerful across the ocean.— They did not, or could not, comprehend, that the strength of millions was lodged in that arm, and that the same popular power which limited the encroachments of arbitrary sway, made our King the more terrible to his foes. The power of a British King is the liberty of the people condensed into an irresistible force, which was once courted into alliance by the proudest potentates, and hurled vengeance on those tyrants who wished to become despots of the globe. The gradual affirmation of long-contested rights, through so many centuries, strung the nerves of your subjects, and made them fearless of every foe; while the prerogative of the crown, no longer wild and voracious, but circumscribed within its proper bounds, became as sacred and constitutional as the franchises of the people. Your rights, royal Sir, and the rights of your people, rest on the same foundation. As every act of arbitrary power abridges general liberty, the depression of the people is not less certainly the abasement of regal glory. If a spirit of liberty should arise in any other nation in Europe, its object must be to tear the detested despot from his seat of usurpation, introduce anarchy in place of absolute power, destroy the land with civil commotion, and drown it in blood : but the security and establishment of constitutional rights in the subjects of this realm, is the aggrandizement of our monarch, the exaltation of his dignity, and the splendour of his crown.

It is therefore, most gracious Sovereign, from a deep and enthusiastic veneration for the genuine principles of a constitution, which equally respects the prerogative of the crown and the privileges of

the people, that your subjects of Ireland are constrained to declare, in the presence of God and of your Majesty,—with urgent and unanimous voice,—that the interference of the aristocratic body in elections, and its consequential influence over a large majority of the commons house, is unconstitutional, and an intolerable grievance. It is this interference which excludes your faithful people from the least share of participation in that government which their ancestors acquired, and your ancestors redeemed; in that government, which is to superintend their properties, their liberties, and their lives. It is this interference which closes up the natural channel of communication between our Sovereign and his people; and with enormous power overshadowing the land, intercepts or turns from their destined direction every ray of royal benevolence. It is this interference which destroys the balance of the different estates of legislature, and subjects the rights of MILLIONS to a few men, whose interests are not more hostile to the freedom of the subject than derogatory of the real dignity of the throne. Far, very far is it from our intention, to offer the slightest injury to one constituent part of government, or to disturb that happy contexture which time has sanctified and which experience has approved. We do not touch with adventurous or desperate hands, that venerable constitution, which has been framed by the labour of our ancestors, and cemented with their blood. Could we dare to remove a single stone that supports the sacred edifice, the groans of these ancestors would arise from their graves and stop us in our progress. The aristocracy, of whose extravagant influence we at present complain, has always been the guardian of the land, when it moved within the circle of the constitution. It has always manifested itself a powerful and prevailing mediator and intercessor between the King and the people. But if this power swells in an overgrown magnitude,

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by feasting on the rights of the community, if it rises to such gigantic size as *to look down even upon the throne*—we must fly into your Majesty's presence as to an asylum, and seek for protection and mediation where alone it can be found—in your Majesty's wisdom and goodness.

With our eyes lifted up to Heaven, we declare to your Majesty, that the great source of all our national evils arises from a conviction deeply sunk in the minds of all ranks of men, that the interests of the nation are subjected to the absolute will and pleasure of men elected by, and dependent upon, a selfish aristocracy.—A subjection which we must call servile and unnatural, the fertile cause of present grievances, and the pregnant parent of future oppressions, unless your Majesty's most gracious interposition shall rescue this land from impending ruin. It is not only the tyrannical exercise of power which makes it tyrannical; but all governments must be of that nature, which have not in their constitution sufficient security against arbitrary power, from whatever quarter it may proceed. When, therefore, the vital principles of free government are infected, when the lustre of monarchy is sullied, and the primary franchises of the people in danger of annihilation, we imagine, that under these circumstances, **ARECURRENCE TO FIRST PRINCIPLES** becomes **INDISPENSABLE**. To *reform* the constitution is in this case to **RESTORE** it. But little studious of names in a subject so deeply interesting, we are ready to call the attempt to renovate our constitution, an *innovation*, if the same term be applied to those changes in our government which form the brightest pages in the annals of its history—to **MAGNA CHARTA**, to the **BILL OF RIGHTS**; to that religious revolution distinguished by the name of **REFORMATION**: and, to what we shall ever deem a glorious innovation on the usage of the realm—the **SETTLE-**

SETTLEMENT of the illustrious House of Hanover on the throne of these kingdoms.

At the same time in which we lay our grievances before our Sovereign and our Father, we call upon the shades of an Alfred, an Edward, and a William, to hover at this instant over your honoured head, and to pour down upon you the inspiration of their just, generous, and extensive counsels. We call upon HIM who first founded the constitution, and mixed the genius of so many nations into a rich tide of personal valour and public glory;—upon HIM, who carried on the glorious work, tempered monarchy with popular privilege, and made the greatest happiness of the greatest number the policy of the state;—upon HIM, who rescued this constitution from perdition, and wrote upon his flag those golden words,—“ I will maintain the liberties of the empire.”—We call upon you, illustrious Sovereign, in their great names, to vindicate your crown, and to save your people. There are certain æras in the history of this nation, when the elastic spirit of freedom struggles to throw off the incumbent weight which oppresses it, and which the lapse of time, or the abuses of the constitution, had accumulated with slow and almost imperceptible additions. When a *James*, or a *Charles*, happen to mount the throne in these critical periods, they disobey or shut their eyes against the signal of Heaven, press the people with a still heavier hand, and force the tortured nation into convulsion. Yet the crimes of the prince become the immediate or remote means of general good, and tyrants themselves, the unwilling instruments of divine benevolence. But, blessed be God, he often condescends to signalize such momentous periods, by sending as his messengers patriot Kings, who unite with the nation in bringing about a bloodless revolution; and thus restoring the empire to its original grandeur. In such a period appeared the immortal WILLIAM, whose conquest was with-
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out a groan, and whose triumph was without a war:—That great and good monarch *George the First*, seconded in the same manner the designs of Heaven, and rescued the crown once more from a race that polluted it. It is yours, royal Sir, to rise not only above the crowd of Kings, but above even these our most illustrious monarchs, and to become our greatest DELIVERER. In your power, is it placed, O King! to usher in a new order of things, to perfect the glories of the constitution, and to make the name of GEORGE THE THIRD luminous in the historic page to the remotest generations. While the kingdoms of Europe are sunk in the depths of despotism, be it yours to place yourself at the head of the united empire; and by restoring that freedom of constitution, which grew with the earliest growth of the British power, and covered your ancestors with the mantle of majesty, restore to these islands their former greatness; greatness that made them happy at home and respectable abroad, greatness now sinking in the dust, for the want of that actual representation which is the birth-right of man, and which is absolutely necessary to make these kingdoms either FREE or FRATERNAL! Then will the thunder of the state roll as loudly as before, and the flag of the united empire shall be a stream of lightning flashing in the eyes of its foes. Other Kings will have *servile subjects*; you alone will have—A PEOPLE. The sun of liberty which has travelled, in the progress of centuries, from the eastern to the western hemisphere, ripening the noble powers and faculties of human nature wherever it arrived, and leaving at its departure a dismal desolation, would *stand still* at your command, and its light would linger around those fortunate isles which gloried in having you for their King.

Let not our King listen to those men whose interest it is to deceive, by ascribing the distracted state of this country, and its rapid depopulation, to a cause so inadequate

inadequate to the effect, as the suggestions of a petty party, or the licentiousness of a factious few. He who reads the human heart knows, how unwilling we are to disturb the peace of the royal breast, with the complaints of a much injured people. He knows how sincerely we deprecate the horrors that attend civil commotion; and with what long suffering and patient endurance we have reiterated our grievances in the ears of those who have treated us in return with contempt and derision. He knows, that we are attached to our native soil by all the tender ties and charities of life; and that it is within our estimation an equal alternative *to abandon it—or to die*. The man, whoever he may be, that can, for a moment, dissuade a virtuous prince from the most exalted display of human excellence, by the liberation of millions of his fellow-creatures, is equally *the enemy of the PEOPLE, the CROWN, and the CONSTITUTION*. Listen rather, Sir, to those who have been in all ages the protectors of our constitutional monarchy and the pillars of the state,—to that great statesman and faithful servant, who though dead still speaketh, and who under your auspices, struck a blow in the world that resounded through its history; to him, the son of that same man, now your first minister, and who in this great point reconciles opposition and destroys party; to him who presides in your most sacred counsels; to the wisest and best men in the three kingdoms:—listen to ENGLAND, SCOTLAND, and IRELAND, who, in pursuit of this glorious object, are uniting into one grand association, which every day increases in strength and in numbers.

Your people of Ireland will never despair of the common-weal, while they are suffered to appeal to your Majesty; and while the extraordinary and multiplied exertions of private virtue and patriotism which have of late years raised this isle into eminence, so strongly indicate, that there is a fund of sense

ense and spirit diffused throughout this kingdom; which collected with prudence and applied with skill, may, with the assistance of the Sovereign, successfully counteract the otherwise fatal increase of aristocratical influence. For this sole purpose of collecting the will of the nation, and of procuring the solemn verdict of public opinion, your people have assembled together, and called this assembly—Convention. It is an assembly founded on the first principle of the constitution—the right of petitioning. It is an assembly which glories in pursuing the end and object of its desires, by a regular progress, by the faithful adherence of loyalty, and by the ways of PEACE. Formed by no faction, submitted to no demagogue, it is composed of men the most honoured and respected in the land; men who at all times have supported the just prerogatives of the crown; men whose extensive properties make them deeply interested in the peace and prosperity of the empire; men who have guarded this island from foreign invasion and domestic disturbance; men who have received the most splendid marks of eminence and distinction from the honour-giving hand of their beloved Sovereign.

Listen to our petitions, O our Father and our King! Gloriously anticipate, *in the way which to your wisdom may seem most meet*, the redemption of your people; and by becoming the saviour of the empire, become the arbiter, not merely of Europe, but of the world. The period of political reform must arrive. God will not suffer his image on earth to be long defaced and degraded. The light of science, the influence of wise and good men, the improved knowledge of human nature and its rights, the liberal communication of private sentiment, and public opinion, and the sympathy which great souls in the most distant nations have with each other,—are all causes conspiring to introduce a revolution that will yet raise this empire to eminence, and rescue
the

the dignity of human character. Acknowledge these auspicious signals of Heaven! Croud all the fruits of coming time, all the godlike deeds of future days into one illustrious moment! Make fate as it were your own, and seize with noble daring the honours of posterity. An Almighty arm seems to break through the dark cloud of futurity, and slowly beckons you to the consummation of human glory. You are advancing in years. Every moment drags you nearer to the silent abode of your ancestors; and while in our hearts we are saying "O King, live for ever!" time is preparing a repository for the dead. May the hand of death fall slowly and gently on your honoured head, and may no sudden stroke of disease deprive the nation a third time of their Sire and Sovereign. Give your people a free constitution, and the gratitude of remotest generations will be your noblest APOTHEOSIS.

O R E L L A N A.

L E T T E R VII.

FELLOW-SLAVES,

THE spirit of the North has much influence on the spirit of the nation. The North itself is impelled by the spirit of particular counties; and in these counties the ascendant power of individuals, if it does not generate the love of liberty, is always found to direct, to modify, to confirm, or to restore it. I like aristocracy well, if this term indicates

cates only the influence of wise and good men, when the best are the most powerful, and when virtue confers the truest nobility. The agency of such men inspired this country with a passion for public glory, quickened the inert mass of the multitude, and urged it forward into accelerated motion. A certain unaccountable languor and sluggishness of spirit in these same men have produced our political anticlimax, and the nation deprived of their sustaining influence, is like to descend into inglorious gradation to its original abasement. Every one waits until he sees those take the lead who took it before: but when the men whom you have been accustomed to follow, retreat from their conspicuous stations, you cannot readily find proper partizans to occupy their places; you grow timid and irresolute, are obliged to give way, or at least shift your position, and all runs into disorder and confusion. I wish to believe, that the apathy of the public mind proceeds merely from the fault of a few; because this in some degree rescues the character of my country, and because the evil on this supposition is more easily corrected. It is incumbent on those distinguished individuals, who espoused with so much warmth the cause of the people, seriously to reflect, that their past exertions must eventually prove *prejudicial* to that cause, if their assistance be now withdrawn; for these exertions made you not only rely on the permanence of the same zeal for the time to come, but by reposing too long and too securely on the abilities of others, incapacitated you in a great measure from acting for yourselves. Much have those men to answer for at the tribunal of the public, who walk about at this time like the deaf and dumb in those counties which but a little before they had animated with ardour, and enlightened with information. This is not merely the subtraction of so much personal merit.—It breaks a link in the chain that holds up the hopes of the nation; and the
stroke

stroke is felt in the *remotest* part of the kingdom, by the strict connexions and dependencies which have drawn the friends of reform into the closest confederation. In looking over the list of what may be called the ABSENTEE COUNTIES, I scarcely credit my eyes when I see that one which led the van, now lingering in the rear, I address myself.

To the COUNTY of ARMAGH.

To that county which had the distinction of originating the first Dungannon meeting; and of consequence, awakened the spirit of reform throughout the North. Are those who first came on the field, ambitious to be the first in moving off? Are they ashamed to finish what they were so eager to begin? Where are the redoubtable 6000 who subscribed their names to a petition, which almost carpeted the House of Commons, and gave additional influence even to a BROWNLOW? Your county is now an anonymous county. Like the emperor Charles V. you sit in your coffin, rehearse your own funeral, and minister to your own obsequies; while I claim the honour of pronouncing an eulogy on that spirit, which had the proud honour of lifting the Volunteer standard, and marshalling our way to Dungannon. You perhaps are led to believe, that the mere expression of your wishes is sufficient, and that it is *unnecessary* to reiterate them; but in what we are directed to persevere, if it be not in the repeated declaration of our grievances? It is an easy direction indeed to persevere *in doing nothing*; but can any positive good arise from this negative conduct? I look in the dictionary for the exact meaning of this puzzling polysyllable, PERSEVERANCE, and I find that it implies steadiness in *pursuit*, and constancy in *progress*. Can we pursue and stand still—at the same time? Can the same be at once stationary and progressive? A cessation of all active power in the
people

people cannot surely be perseverance. An intermission in the pulse of political life, rather indicates a sudden dissolution. Does any man among you suppose that parliament will take up the question of reform this session, or any other session, if the matter in *train* be interrupted by even a temporary suspension on the part of the public? Persevere, then, in doing as you have already done. If you have resolved, addressed and petitioned, Lord Charlemont and Mr. Brownlow, by inciting you to perseverance, must be concluded the advocates of a meeting which carries on—the work you begun; for how you can PERSEVERE by ALTERING your whole course of conduct and giving the lie to yourselves, I do not comprehend. This is a sort of zig-zag perseverance which is little better than going backward; at least the H. of C. will think it the same thing, and will act accordingly. If any one step in the progress of this business was necessary, the present step must be equally so; because it springs from the rest, and tends at the same time to make your footing more *broad*, and therefore more secure. The enemies of reform, by cabal and intrigue, must rather animate your county than injure your meeting; and be assured that your present political nonentity is to them an apparent victory, and tells against you as a real defeat. The cause of reform in your country ought not to fear the petulance of opposition, or the tricks of debate. I should not wish that you were without enemies! It is the laborious struggle for our rights which produces the qualities of mind necessary to maintain them. The enemy I most fear is—*within yourselves*. I fear that sluggish stagnant disposition of soul which no passion can agitate, and which has neither wish nor aversion.

You ought *not* to wait until you hear Mr. PITT's argument for reform, but you yourselves are to give an additional argument to Mr. Pitt. It is in
your

your power to become an interesting topic in his speech, and the failure of the friends of reform in this kingdom, must rob his eloquence of more than half its energy. Lord North will have the names of every county, not represented, carefully written down in his pocket-book; and if he begins with calling out Armagh, the members with lifted hands and eyes, will ask, if that be the county which boasted in a Charlemont and a Brownlow? The minister depends upon Ireland as much as Ireland does on the minister. The same popularity which lifted him to his station, must support him in it. He agitates the question of reform at present, because it is a popular question; but if it ceases to be a popular question, he will also cease to harrangue upon it. If Mr. Pitt be a sincere advocate for reform, he would incite you to a county-meeting, were he among you at this instant. If he be an advocate for a mutilated reform, your exertion is the only mean to amplify his conceptions; and if he be but an *ostensible* friend, you surely ought not to delay a moment on his account.

But the assembly of Delegates ought not to sit during the session of parliament!—What? Did not the first men in the nation accept of delegations from the Volunteer Army *before* the people had spoken at all? Did not those very men sit in that assembly under the eye of government in October and November 1783; when the castle-guards were doubled, as if to give their meeting more importance and solemnity. What?—Are those men whose conduct on that occasion contributed in such an eminent degree to rouse the electors of Ireland, and make them recho-like men, the demand of their volunteer brethren—are *these same men* to wither and blast in a moment that flourishing spirit which ages may not revive? Has any new matter since occurred? Is a *volunteer* convention so much their favourite object of adoration, that it is safe, honourable and meritorious to sit as a volunteer, but base and degrading to sit as the

the representatives of counties, comprehending volunteers, and every other description of electors?—When, when, I say, are you to speak if not now?—Who called on the people to speak—*I know the man!* “All that remains,” said he, on the close of the volunteer convention, “is, to return to our counties, and to inform them that it is for *them immediately* to speak out with the spirit of freemen.” Did any man in the convention expect that the house would entertain the bill? Did any county in Ireland expect it? What was expected from the volunteer assembly? What from county-meetings?—What but to rouse the universal spirit of the nation, to lay the ground out for progressive approaches, that in the end P—t might find it vain to oppose the voice of millions?—What was then the language of the most eminent patriots?—Be not surprized that parliament should throw out your bill and treat it with contempt. How was the octennial bill procured? How were thousands of other concessions (in their day thought as hopeless) obtained?—By PROGRESSIVE MEASURES: by supporting the people, and bringing them session by session to the charge. Forsake us not, illustrious countrymen, while we are pursuing that line of conduct which *you yourselves* have pointed out. Our cause is a common one: You have pledged your faith to us and to the world by your past conduct, that you will not forsake us. Do for us what we have done for you. It is the people who have pointed your periods and gives a body to your figures: it was their arms that flashed conviction upon your antagonists in debate; and your eloquence receives its polish and its power from the armoury of the people. Steadiness in the compact between you and the people, is all that is wanting to crown our cause with success.

It is said by *high authority*, that the assembly of delegates ought to be held, *provided* it could be made equally respectable with the volunteer convention.

ton. But who are they that can perform the conditions of this stipulation? The very same men that make it. Let *them* speak the commanding word, **WE WILL**; and it is done. We will exert ourselves for the meeting, *provided* it is respectable! Attend it---and it must be respectable. Let them imitate the conduct of CHARLEMONT, a patriot whose fame has now taken a mature and mellow tint, almost peculiar to his own illustrious character. When called upon, six years ago, to review the Volunteers, then learning the rudiments of war, he did not return for answer, that he would come, *provided* there were so many thousands in the field. He came; and saw but few. He returned, and saw more. They multiplied beneath his eye, and * HANNIBAL, that bore his honoured master, was at length weary in slowly pacing round the long array. —He attended by proxy at Dungannon, and he presided at the convention without a *provision*. Honour and respect flew before him like harbingers, and announced the coming of that man who must make any meeting illustrious. This earth can supply us with few objects more illustrious than a great and active spirit, moving onward in the all-sufficiency of manly virtue, and with zeal that strikes fire from disappointment to a practicable perfection of public freedom; and if he wants a solace in his labours, transporting himself with patriotic prescience to that period, when posterity shall consecrate his recorded name, and engrave it still deeper in the roll of immortality.

Freeholders and Inhabitants of the County of ARMAGH, I call upon you to be consistent with yourselves; to follow your representatives, one of whom sat in convention; and the other nobly voted in parliament for a reform, which must indeed fix him the more securely in his seat and in your affections;

* The name of a favourite horse he at that time rode.

tions;—to follow that right honourable BARONET, whose steady and uniform support, in and out of convention, of your favourite object, is acknowledged by you all;—to follow a SYNNOT and a COPE, who are prompting you to do your duty as freeholders and freemen. Who dare despond under such leaders?—Let no man dare to despond until the dye is cast. Despondence is a poor, weeping, whimpering quality of mind, unfit for *bearded* men. Your county boasts of many other noble souls, that I could individually specify, who are an honour to Ireland. If they be forgotten in the roll of fame, that generosity surely is not less glorious which blesses in secret: and they must think it a just cause of virtuous pride, that their country could engage so *many* advocates in her cause as to render it difficult to particularize them. There is a pleasure that some minds feel in the PURSUIT of liberty, which its POSSESSION could not communicate to others. You know where your strength lies.—Use it.—Wrestle with difficulties. Watch your enemies and your friends. You have done much. This brings on you an obligation to do more—Liberty is a precious blessing, and cannot be brought cheaply. Go on then in the way you have begun. Blend the prudence and foresight of the *Citizen* with the spirit and finew of the *Soldier*, and enter upon the New-Year like men that deserve to see the end of it.

A flag was once displayed from the Castle of Dublin, with this inscription, NOW OR NEVER, NOW AND FOR EVER. I think I see such a flag streaming over your heads at this important moment, an auspicious signal to lead you to glory, or an unhappy omen to foretell your doom. You seem at length to be half awakened. You rub your eyes and peep at the light, but perhaps all that you intend is to turn to the other side and take another nap in order to complete the century. I will not suppose it. There are men among you who can

act as well as suffer. I speak not to those pedantic patriots who fight manfully in the *historic* field at *Cannæ* or *Thermopylae*, but are little better than faggots in this unclassical æra of contention. I speak not of those patriots whose public spirit ebbs with an empty bottle, and flows with a bumper; or of those hypochondriacal patriots who sit in elbow-chairs, deprecating the calamities that impend over their country, but never stirring one inch to avert them. I speak not to those patriots who seem always waiting until to-morrow become to-day, and whose endless procrastination might serve some purpose, if they could annihilate the time which now *is*, and contrive somehow to exist only in that which is *to come*. I speak to men of active, not of *passive* courage; men whose deeds are their praise; men who are slow to resolve but quick to perform; men whose private interest is the public good; and who in all political questions consult, as an oracle, the genius of the constitution. Such men there are. Come forward from the throng. Forget the distinctions of rank and station. You may be poor, and yet proudly great. No man can be too humble in his private character, or too proud as a candidate for freedom. If this country be capable of freedom, you are the men, whether in the inferior or middle stations of life, who alone are able to make it free.

MEN of TYRONE,

I wish to shame you into virtue. Let the praises which you have merited make you blush at your present inglorious silence. Did Mr. Stewart and his venerable father behave so ill at Dungannon, that you are afraid to return them to the patriot council of the nation? Did the former take his seat in the Volunteer convention to go off the stage in the last and most illustrious scene of public glory? If any thing should happen in the assembly of delegates
conductive

conducive to the interests of the common-weal, you ought to be personated there in order to promote it. If any thing should occur contrary to those interests, you ought to be there in order to counteract it. By being represented you may do good or prevent harm; but what good are you to gain by being as it were *annihilated*. If the other counties take the lead in returning representatives, will not yours cut a ridiculous figure, sneaking in perhaps the lag and hinderling of the whole. For shame! for shame!

MEN of D E R R Y,

I rejoice to see that your city has led the way in rescuing your wounded fame. Public zeal is condensed in towns, but in the larger extent of counties, it is too apt to burn away like powder in the open air, and it consumes with less effect. Your county contains the very *Luiber* of modern reform. That man will not desert his country, unless his country deserts him. This sanguine spirit appears extravagant, by its striking contrast with the languor, indifference, and frigid neutrality of the times. The mild *Melancthon* would never have brought about the reformation of religion; and there is, God knows, a sufficient quantity of indolence, timidity, and selfishness diffused throughout the land, to apprehend much danger from a disposition seemingly so combustible. You are apt to complain of the perfidy of patriots. Take care that the change in your *own* minds does not deceive you into the belief that there is a change in others. When we move round along with the earth, the fixed stars seem to sink in the apparent horizon. The perfidy of a single man is nothing to the perfidy of a whole people. Hear me!—If you be silent now, the fact is, that *you*, the men who lived in the last year, break faith with *you* the same men who live in the present. You are
traitors

traitors to yourselves. You basely violate that trust which *other* counties reposed in you; and you stand by your own acknowledgment, a renegade from your party, your professions, and your principles.

ME N of D O W N,

Arise—the day is come! If there be any vital principle left within you, if you be not sunk for ever in the putrid pool of corruption, aspire to be men. Look down with pity and contempt on that spirit of low intrigue, and state chicanery which petty peddling politicians employ to divide and distract you. Their narrow souls cannot comprehend that sublime policy of acting with openness and candour, but rely on little shifts and the coward arts of mean expedients. O! how heartily do I despise those men that hang half-way between Heaven and Hell, too black for the one, and too white for the other! Go—Men of Down, go to the meeting which many of you have summoned; and go with the confidence of proud yeomanry who scorn to sink to the vulgar level of the great. Go, and your enemies will not dare to look you in the face. But if they do, I shall honour their boldness, and rejoice that at length we can *see* our enemies. I shall rejoice to have them in the *sunshine*, to draw them out from their ambuscade of whispers and insinuations. It is the venom of the shaft I fear, not the vigour of the bow. I beseech them to attend the meeting. It is to be held at Downpatrick the *fifteenth* of the * current month. They have time enough to prepare their enginery, to scour their rusty shields, and to brighten the spear. Let us see them face to face in the open area of argument, and in the light of day. They shall be heard with attention and with all possible respect. The cause which we adopt scorns to borrow help from the paltry artifices of election,

* January, 1785.

election, nor do we wish to wound our own pride by receiving that applause which depends on the depreciation of a rival. We do not doubt of their abilities: all we want is to see them exerted. I call then again on every man who is bold enough to declare in the face of Ireland, that a reform is unnecessary, to *attend* at this meeting summoned by fifteen hundred freeholders; and if they find no one present but themselves, let them chuse their Chairman, appoint their secretary, and sign the sentence of merited damnation to the public spirit of the county of Down. Freeholders, when you assemble, make your choice of men as delegates, who are ever ready to countenance the just claims and animate the reasonable hopes of the nation; men whose minds are more akin to the sturdy oak than to the weeping willow; men who can keep to their patriotic purpose unmoved, unshaken, unseduced and unterrified—though worlds should judge it singular, rash, and out of season; men like the four delegates you returned to the Volunteer Convention, men like the brother of—ROBERT STEWART.

MEN of MONAGHAN,

Remember those resolutions in which you agreed in the most ample manner to the *necessity* of a reform. The reform is *not* necessary unless every county acts *as the half of Ireland has already acted*. The reform is *not* necessary, if every county takes merely the trouble of expressing their opinion, without moving or exerting itself to make that opinion successful. Let the people hear me when I aver, that this country is on some occasions as much injured by the friends of reform, as by its enemies. They break that unity of plan; they disorder that regularity in station; they check that celerity in execution, which most usually command success, and which always deserve it. Why say that reform is necessary, and yet

yet neglect to make use of the very means which your countrymen have declared to be the best means of procuring it. By breaking from that plan which has been generally adopted, you are, (I hope unconsciously) commencing a **CIVIL WARFARE** in your country, which will leave its inhabitants a prey to its worst enemies. Every county ought to impel the power already in motion, although they might *now* think of a better procedure. Retrogradation at present is the dereliction of the whole. What would the principles of the **MONTGOMERY** family lead them to at this crisis? **SONS!** ask your father. He will not answer you. It is indeed needless.—His virtue, senatorial integrity and public spirit, make the best reply. **FRANCIS LUCAS**, hold up your head and lead the Whig interest once more to the charge. If patriotism be your profession, pursue it like a man who labours in his vocation. If it be your principle, act like a man of principle, and approve yourself of that elastic metal which may be bent for some time, but cannot be broken.

Let the *Men of* **FERMANAGH** and of **CAVAN** add two new strings to the Irish Harp, and it will then, in rich and deep variety of tone, resound throughout the nation. Aristocracy will dread it like the sound of the last trumpet, and will beseech the mountains to fall and cover them; while the genius of the common-weal will rise in glorious resurrection, shaking the dust from off his sacred head, and with a smile of benignity that breaks on his countenance through the cloud of oblivion, recognizing those much-loved children who, ever in these degenerate days, have virtue and resolution to be **FREE**.

Listen all of you to the words of the Minister,
 " I will support the question of reform to the utmost
 " of

“ of my *strength*, and exert my whole *power* and
 “ *credit* as a MAN and a MINISTER, honestly and
 “ boldly; to carry such a meliorated system of re-
 “ presentation, as may place the constitution on a
 “ footing of permanent security.” If government be
 sincere with respect to England, it now depends
 upon the unanimous voice of this nation to interest
 the Minister equally in favour of IRELAND. If
 the will of the public be for a free parliament, let
 the public speak.—If it continues silent NOW, the
 form of the constitution may remain, but the soul
 is departed for ever. Ministers and Kings may do
 what they chuse, but the only specific cure for the
 corruption of the representative body is the sound-
 ness and integrity of the people. Without this,
 freedom is gratuitous. It hangs upon the tenure of
 a moment; and concessions of commercial or con-
 stitutional privileges are the alms of beggary—and
 the trappings of servitude. Accidental state neces-
 sity, or the caprice of political character, are poor se-
 curities for the rights of a nation. Magna Charta
 is a dead letter, if the root of freedom rots in the
 hearts of the people; and repeal, or renunciation,
 are but the donatives of despotism. You are now
 to manifest to all the nations of the earth, whether
 the caprice of fortune, a tumultuary fit of national
 passion, or a conversion of public principle, and a
 permanent revolution in your character as a people—
 have been your motives of action.—Whether Irish
 patriotism is merely on imp of faction, dandled and
 petted by a party, the sickly spawn of a luxurious
 city, or the nerve, support and glory of the island.
 NOW OR NEVER, NOW AND FOR EVER! I lay my
 hand on my mouth while my heart burns within me,
 and with the consciousness of having done my duty,
 sink into the noiseless tenor of professional life.

O R E L L A N A,

An IRISH HELOT.

Rath-geltair mic Duach.

(27)

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OR FELL A N A

